In defense of covert A-movement: 
Backward raising and beyond

Maria Polinsky
Harvard University
Workshop on Diagnostics in Syntax
Leiden and Utrecht, January 29-31, 2009

1 Introduction

GOAL OF THIS TALK: present and analyze evidence for covert A-movement; 
present arguments and diagnostics for distinguishing Agree and covert 
movement

MAIN QUESTIONS:
• Should all phenomena where a constituent appears to have been “covertly 
displaced” to a higher position receive a unified analysis?
• Specifically, should they all be accounted for without movement, contra 
earlier movement-based analyses?

ANSWERS AS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:
• These phenomena should receive a unified analysis
• These phenomena should be accounted for without movement due to the 
assumption that Agree is sufficient to account for what was earlier 
associated with covert movement (Chomsky 2000, etc.)

ANSWERS AS PROPOSED HERE:
• These phenomena are distinct and should not all receive a unified analysis
• Some require a (covert A-)movement analysis, others a non-movement 
analysis

OUTLINE OF THE TALK
• What is displaced is moved, or in support of covert A-movement: 
Backward Raising in Adyghe (section 2)
• When Agree is good enough: Greek (section 3)
• Diagnosing covert A-movement across languages (section 4)
• Conclusions and outstanding questions (section 5)

2 True covert A-movement: Backward Raising in Adyghe

Adyghe (Circassian): NW Caucasian (Abkhazo-Adyghean) language, spoken in 
the south of Russia and Turkey

(1)  NW Caucasian (Abkhazo-Adyghean) family

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Circassian} \\
\text{Abkhazian} \\
\text{Ubykh} \\
\text{Kabardian} \\
\text{Adyghe} \\
\text{Abazin}
\end{array}
\]

head-final, extremely free surface word order, with a difference between root 
and embedded clauses (embedded clauses have to be verb-final); pro-drop 
morphological cases (case marking fused with the determiner): ergative (-m), 
absolutive (-r), generalized oblique; other relations expressed by PPs; no 
quirky cases (see Rogava and Keraševa 1966; Smeets 1984)

rich agreement with the absolutive (ABS) and ergative (ERG) in person and 
number;
prefixal agreement: slots for each of these DPs, agreement in number+person;
suffixal agreement: agreement with ABS only, only in number

(2)  
\[
\text{axe-me pjEsme-r a-txEn-e new feZa-R-ex}
\]

3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL-ERG-write-SUP begin-PAST-PL

EMBEDDED AGENT LDA, AS ABS?
‘They began to write a letter.’

Unusual: the agent of the embedded clause remains downstairs but determines 
what seems like Long-Distance Agreement in the matrix clause

The verbs are unaccusative: do not assign a thematic role, allow idiom chunks to 
rise, do not form imperatives

(3)  
\[
expl \text{axe-me pjEsme-r a-txEn-e new feZa-R-ex}
\]

3ABS-start-PRES

‘It starts getting cold.’
Evidence for the biclausal structure: each clause can have independent temporal specification and separate negation; NPI can be licensed in the lower or higher clause; double relativization (see Polinsky and Potsdam 2005)

(4) a. [maʃjone-r depq-əm jew-e-new] təwe ʂwe car-ABS wall-OBL hit-INF twice turned_out
‘The car twice turned out to hit the wall.’
(two separate occasions)
b. [maʃjone-r depq-əm təwe jew-e-new] ʂwe car-ABS wall-OBL twice hit-INF turned_out
‘The car turned out to hit the wall twice.’
(two hittings on one occasion)

(5) a. jalešəm aq’weç [šhəne’em-əq’əe təwe sə-we-new] this year gun-INSTR twice 1SG-shoot-SUP ʂwe
turned out
‘This year I turned out to shoot my gun twice (in a row).’
b. jalešəm aq’weç [šhəne’em-əq’əe sə-we-new] this year gun-INSTR 1SG-shoot-SUP təwe ʂwe
twice turned out
‘This year there were two times that I turned out to shoot my gun.’

Evidence for raising: no imperative formation, no selectional restrictions, preservation of idiomatic meanings

(6) a. ə-pe hwəza-r qərexə 3SG.POSS-nose smoke-ABS blows
‘S/He is furious.’ (lit.: smoke is coming out of his/her nose)
b. [ə-pe hwəza-r qərexjə-new] qəçećə’əbęfəζež 3SG.POSS-nose smoke-ABS blow-NEW
‘S/He happened/began to be furious.’

(7) a. gəašə’ə’e-m gəašə’ə’e qjəlfo word-ERG word.ABS give_birth.PRES
lit.: “Word gives birth to word.”
‘There are consequences to what one says.’
b. gəašə’ə’e-m gəašə’ə’e qəλə’fəw əδəble-ə word-ERG word.ABS give_birth-INF start-PAST
lit. “Word started giving birth to word.”
‘What s.o. said began to have consequences.’

Summary so far: an embedded argument, regardless of its case, determines morphological agreement on the matrix verb as if it were absolutive

(8) Analytical possibilities:
a. Long-distance agreement
b. Backward Raising (covert A-movement)

LONG-DISTANCE AGREEMENT analysis—matrix clause has no representation of the raised subject, agreement is determined by the DP in the embedded clause

(9)  Agree ______

[axe-me pəsmə-r a-təxə-new] qəçećə’a-ə’ex 3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL-ERG-write-SUP happen-PAST-PL
‘They happened to write a letter.’

BACKWARD RAISING analysis—matrix clause contains a silent representation of the raised subject, which determines agreement locally

(10)  Agree ______

‘They happened to write a letter.’

2.2 Arguments against Long-Distance Agreement and for Backward Raising

2.2.1 quirky agreement
plural suffixal agreement is determined by the absolutive argument; exceptional quirky agreement has to be posited for the construction in question where the agreement can be determined by the ergative DP or absolutive DP:

(11) ergative goal

[axe-me pəsmə-r a-təxə-new] qəçećə’a-ə’ex 3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL-ERG-write-SUP happen-PAST-PL
‘They happened to write a letter.’
(12) absolutive goal

\[ \text{agree} \]

\[ \text{[axe-r tue qəkeəpəcə-new]} \quad qəcəqə-ə-k-ex \]

3PL-ABS twice ask-SUP happen-PAST-PL

‘They happened to ask twice.’

2.2.2 subject in the lower clause

Diagnostics: the subject’s case is determined by the lower predicate (ERG if transitive, ABS if intransitive); the subject is relativized with wh-agreement (cf. O’Herin 2002: Ch. 8)

- case alternations related to the transitivity of embedded verb

(13) a. [thape-xe-r pəzə-new] \[ xə-ək-ex \]

leaf-PL-ABS fall-SUP 3ABS-began-3PL

‘(The) leaves began to fall.’

b. [axe-me se sašə-e-new] \[ xə-mə-x \]

3PL-ERG 1SG.ABS lead-SUP 3SG.ABS-began-3PL.ABS

‘They began to lead me.’

- wh-agreement under relativization

(14) a. mə çəfa-m jə-maşjone ə-s’ɛz’ə-ə

this man-ERG 3SG.POSS-car 3SG.ERG-sell-PAST

‘This man sold his car.’

b. [zə-maşjone ec ə-s’ɛz’ə-x]

WH.POSS-car WHERG-sell man-ABS

‘the man who sold his car’

(15) a. [mə çəfa-m jə-maşjone ə-s’ɛz’ə-new] qəcəqə-ə-ə

this man-ERG 3SG.POSS-car 3ERG-sell-SUP happen-PAST

‘This man happened to sell his car.’

b. [[zə-maşjone ec ə-s’ɛz’ə-x]] ə-s’ɛz’ə的新

WH.POSS-car WHERG-sell-SUP WHABS-happen man-ABS

‘the man that happened to sell his car’

c. ?? [[jə-maşjone ə-s’ɛz’ə-x]] ə-s’ɛz’ə的新

3SG.POSS-car 3SG.ERG-sell-SUP WHABS-happen man-ABS

‘the man that happened to sell his car’

2.2.3 silent copy of raised subject in matrix clause

Diagnostics: matrix scope of the lower subject; reflexive on the higher verb; emphatic depictive (only in some dialects); variable binding

- scope with respect to matrix negation

wide scope of the quantified DP which is downstairs (as apparent from its case), regardless of its linear position

(16) zəcəme zakonxe-r a-tecaçer-ep

al.ERG laws-ABS 3PL.ERG-obey-NEG

‘Nobody obeys the law.’ (lit.: All do not obey laws)  ALL > NEG

‘Not everybody obeys the law.’  NEG > ALL

(17) zəcəme zakonxe-r a-mə-tecaçε-new

al.ERG laws-ABS 3PL.ERG-obey-SUP turn out.PRES(-PL)

‘Everybody turns out not to obey the law.’  ALL > NEG

%‘Not everybody turns out to obey the law.’  NEG > ALL

- scope with respect to the raising verb: the DP in the lower clause can take wide scope over the matrix verb

(18) a. [as’-zaqWE Wse-r ə-txə-x]

3SG.ERG-only poem-ABS 3SG.ERG-write-SUP stop-PAST

‘Only s/he stopped to write a poem.’

“It’s only her who stopped writing a poem.”  ONLY > STOP

?? “It stopped being the case that she was the only one to write a poem.”  STOP > ONLY

b. [Wse-r ə-txə-x] ar-zaqWE waxe-x

poem-ABS 3SG.ERG-write-SUP 3SG.ABS-only stop-PAST

‘Only s/he stopped to write a poem.’

“It’s only her who stopped writing a poem.”  ONLY > STOP

?? “It stopped being the case that she was the only one to write a poem.”  STOP > ONLY

- reflexivization

matrix verb can show reflexive marking (only for fezen ‘begin’, wəxən ‘stop, be over’, weblen ‘start, begin’)

(19) axe-r [pəsme-r ə-txə-x]

3PL-ABS letter-ABS 3PL.ERG-write-SUP REFL-begin-PAST-PL

‘They began to write a letter for themselves.’

b. [axe-me pəsme-r ə-txə-x]

3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL.ERG-write-SUP REFL-begin-PAST-PL

‘They began to write a letter for themselves.’
licensing of matrix quantifier

(20)a. [aš jež ə-m ə-txə-new] qəčə'čə-ə-əex
3SG.ERG by_self-ERG poem-ABS 3SG.ERG-write-SUP happen-PAST
‘S/he happened to write a poem by him/herself.’

(b) Licensing of matrix quantifier

(21) [mə ʔəef-ər zepste,ə-e,me a-š'e-new]
this work-ABS all-ERG 3PL.POSS-child-PL-OBL
ja,sebij-xe-m paje qəčə'čə-ə-əellites
3PL.POSS-child-PL-OBL for happen-PAST(-PL)
‘All happened to know how to do this work, to the benefit of their children.’

> the Long-Distance agreement analysis is untenable

2.3 analysis

Raising of the embedded subject to matrix clause subject position

(22) axe-r [axe-me pjasme-r a-txə-new] qəčə'čə-ə-əex
3PL-ABS 3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL.ERG-write-SUP happen-PAST-PL
‘They happened to write a letter.’

Backward Raising involves pronouncing the lower copy of movement chain Agree takes place locally between the higher copy and the raising verb

(23) ↓ Agree ↓

axe-r [axe-me pjasme-r a-txə-new] qəčə'čə-ə-əex
3PL-ABS 3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL.ERG-write-SUP happen-PAST-PL
‘They happened to write a letter.’

Since both copies are case-marked, the higher copy can also be pronounced

(24) axe-r [axe-me pjasme-r a-txə-new] qəčə'čə-ə-əex
3PL-ABS 3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL.ERG-write-SUP happen-PAST-PL
‘They happened to write a letter.’

Theoretically, the variation between Forward and Backward Raising is permitted by principles of chain reduction (Nunes 2004)

(25) a. pronounce only one copy (stipulation)
b. pronounce the copy that has minimum unchecked features

(26) Adyghe: Neither copy has unchecked features, so both options are possible

The choice of copy for deletion is determined outside syntax (cf. Boškovic 2002, Bobaljik and Wurmbrand 2005; cf. Potsdam 2007 for a similar alternation in Malagasy Object Control)

If not syntax, what determines the pronunciation of a particular copy?

> Information structure?

preferences based on proximity to the licensing verb (the verb whose proximity matters is underlined; the relevant DP is in boldface)

(27) a. axe-r qəčə'čə-əex [axe-me pjasme-r a-txə-new] FORWARD
3PL-ABS happened 3PL-ERG letter-ABS 3PL.ERG-write-SUP
b. [axe-me pjasme-r a-txə-new] axe-r qəčə'čə-əex FORWARD
b'. [pjasme-r axe-me a-txə-new] axe-r qəčə'čə-əex FORWARD
c. [pjasme-r axe-me a-txə-new] axe-r qəčə'čə-əex BACKWARD
d. qəčə'čə-əex axe-r [axe-me pjasme-r a-txə-new] FORWARD

e. axe-r [axe-me pjasme-r a-txə-new] qəčə'čə-əex BACKWARD

They happened to write a letter.

Additional processing factor: dispreference for center embedding (cf. Uehara 2003 on the extra processing costs of center embedding in Japanese, Polinsky & Kwon in prep. on the processing cost of center embedding in Korean)
INTERIM CONCLUSIONS:

- Adyghe Forward/Backward Raising alternation instantiates the opposition between overt and covert A-movement.
- The relevant diagnostics identifying covert A-movement: scopal interactions in the matrix clause, licensing of matrix clause elements (depictives, binding), scrambling (language-specific, not reliable in Adyghe).
- Both Forward and Backward Raising are theoretically possible under the decompositional approach to movement and can be accounted for under principles of chain reduction (Nunes 2004).
- Both options are available to a learner and are made visible by case marking and agreement; in addition, Circassian also has the alternation between Forward and Backward Subject Control, cf. in Kabardian:

\[
\begin{align*}
(28a). & \quad \text{p\textsuperscript{s\textsuperscript{a}}\textsuperscript{\text{-m}} [p\textsuperscript{s\textsuperscript{a}}\textsuperscript{\text{-r q\textsuperscript{*a\textsuperscript{\text{-m}}} k\textsuperscript{*\text{-o-n-{}}}}]} \quad \text{jrk\textsuperscript{*aq\textsuperscript{\text{-im}}}} \\
& \quad \text{girl-ERG girl-ABS village-OBL go-INF dared.NEG} \\
& \quad \text{‘The girl did not dare to go to the village.’} \\
(28b). & \quad [p\textsuperscript{s\textsuperscript{a}}\textsuperscript{\text{-r q\textsuperscript{*a\textsuperscript{\text{-m}}} k\textsuperscript{*\text{-o-n-{}}}}] \quad \text{p\textsuperscript{s\textsuperscript{a}}\textsuperscript{\text{-m}}} \quad \text{jrk\textsuperscript{*aq\textsuperscript{\text{-im}}}} \\
& \quad \text{girl-ABS village-OBL go-INF girl-ERG dared.NEG} \\
& \quad \text{‘The girl did not dare go to the village.’ (Kumaxov and Vamling 1998: 239)}
\end{align*}
\]

- Agree alone is not sufficient to replace covert movement.

General difficulties in establishing covert A-movement:
- Structural evidence is difficult to find—but see the diagnostics proposed here.
- Interpretive evidence is weak or unavailable due to lack of thematic role on the raising verb; maybe information-structural evidence?

3 When Agree is good enough: Long-Distance Agreement in Greek

(29) Basic ingredients of Agree

Agree occurs between two syntactic objects, a probe and a goal.

a. Probe c-commands goal
b. Probe has an uninterpretable inflectional feature
c. Goal has an interpretable matching feature
d. Probe and Goal become valued for the matched features
   (Chomsky 2001; Bhatt 2005; Bobaljik and Wurmbrand 2005)

3.1 Greek raising verbs

fenete ‘seem’ (Anagnostopoulou 2003)

Aspectual verbs arxizo ‘start’ and stamatao ‘stop’ (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1999)

(30) a. %ta pedhia fenonde na agapun tin Maria
   the children seem.3PL SBJV love.3PL the Maria
   ‘The children seem to love Maria.’ (see Anagnostopoulou 2003)

b. ta pedhia arxisan na trehoun
   the children start.3PL SBJV run.3PL
   ‘The children started to run.’

c. i dhaskali stamatisan na malonun tus mathites
   the teacher.PL stop.3PL SBJV scold.3PL the students
   ‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’


(31) a. mu bikan psili st’aftia
   1SG.GEN enter.3PL fleas.NOM in.the.ears
   lit. “Fleas entered my ears”
   ‘I became suspicious.’

b. ?psili arxisan [na mu benun st’aftia
   fleas started.3PL SBJV 1SG.GEN enter.3PL in.the.ears
   problematic because of bare plural subject
   ‘I started becoming suspicious.’ (lit.: “Fleas started to enter my ears.”)

(32) a. arxizun na mu anavun ta labakia
   start.3PL SBJV 1SG.DAT light up.3PL DET lamps
   ‘I am beginning to get pissed off.’ (lit.: ‘My lamps start lighting up.’)

b. ta labakia arxizun [na mu anavun]
   DET lamps start.3PL SBJV 1SG.DAT light up.3PL
   ‘I am beginning to get pissed off.’ (lit.: ‘My lamps start lighting up.’)
different from copy raising (cf. Joseph 1976, Perlmutter and Soames 1979 for copy raising in Greek)

subject DP alternates between matrix and embedded clauses

(33) a. i dhaskali stamatisan [na malonun tus mathites]
the teacher.PL stop.3PL SBJV scold.3PL the students
‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

b. stamatisan [na malonun i dhaskali tus mathites]
stop.3PL SBJV scold.3PL the teacher.PL the students
‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

c. arxisan [na mu benun psili st’aftia]
start.3PL SBJV 1SG.GEN enter.3PL flea.PL in.the.ears
‘I started becoming suspicious.’ (lit.: “Fleas started to enter my ears.”)

obligatory agreement on raising verb regardless of the subject’s position

(34) a. i dhaskali stamatisan/*stamatise
the teacher.PL stop.3PL/*3SG [na malonun tus mathites]
SBJV scold.3PL the students
‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

b. stamatisan/*stamatise
stop.3PL/*3SG [na malonun i dhaskali tus mathites]
SUBJ scold.3PL the teacher.PL the students
‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

c. arxisan/*arxise [na mu benun psili st’aftia]
start.3PL/*3SG SBJV 1SG.GEN enter.3PL flea.PL in.the.ears
‘I became suspicious.’ (lit.: “Fleas started to enter my ears.”)

3.2 analytical possibilities

Three options: LDA, Backward Raising, “pure” Agree

LONG-DISTANCE AGREEMENT analysis

(35) Agree ↓↓

stamatisan [na malonun i dhaskali tus mathites]
stop.3PL SBJV scold.3PL the teacher.PL the students
‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

BACKWARD RAISING analysis

(36) i dhaskali stamatisan [na malonun i dhaskali tus mathites]
stop SBJV scold the teachers the students
‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

SCRAMBLING analysis

(37)↓

idha ton dhaskalo/*o dhaskalos
saw.1SG the teacher.ACC/the teacher.NOM na arxizi na maloni ta pedhia
SBJV start.3SG SBJV scold.3SG the children
‘I saw the teacher begin to scold the children.’

3.3 arguments for “low” subject

DP shows uniformly “low” behavior, no evidence that it is ever in the higher clause

• case
subject shows case appropriate for the lower domain

(38) a. idha ton dhaskalo/*o dhaskalos
saw.1SG the teacher.ACC/the teacher.NOM
na arxizi na maloni ta pedhia
SBJV start.3SG SBJV scold.3SG the children
‘I saw the teacher begin to scold the children.’

b. idha [na arxizi
saw.1SG SBJV start.3SG
na maloni o dhaskalos/*ton dhaskalo ta pedhia]
SBJV scold.3SG the teacher.NOM/the teacher.ACC the children
‘I saw the teacher begin to scold the children.’

• coordination
complement clauses can be coordinated, trapping the un-raised subject

(39) a. o dhaskalos arxise
the teacher.NOM started.3SG
[[na maloni ta pedhia] ke [na mazevi tis ergasies]]
SBJV scold.3SG the children and SBJV collect.3SG the papers
‘The teacher began to scold the children and collect the papers.’
b. arxise [na maloni o dhaskalos ta pedhia] started.3SG SBJV scold.3SG the teacher the children ke [na mazevi tis ergasies]] and SBJV collect.3SG the papers

- **scope**
  un-raised DP takes only narrow scope with respect to matrix negation baseline

  (40) a. oli i fitites dhen dhiavasan
  all the students.PL NEG read.3PL
  this the book
  ‘Not all the students read this book.’ NEG > ALL
  ‘All the students did not read this book.’ ALL > NEG

  (41) a. oli i fitites dhen arxisan
  all the students.PL NEG begin.3PL
  [na dhiavun afto to vivlio]
  SUBJ read.3PL this the book
  ‘Not all the students began to read this book.’ NEG > ALL
  ‘All the students did not begin to read this book.’ ALL > NEG

  b. dhen arxisan
  NEG stop.3PL
  [na dhiavun oli i fitites afto to vivlio]
  SUBJ read.3PL all all the students.PL this the book
  ‘Not all the students began to read this book.’ NEG > ALL
  **‘All the students did not begin to read this book.’** ALL > NEG

  un-raised DP takes narrow scope with respect to raising verb

  (42) a. mono i Maria stamatisan [na perni kakus vathmus]
  only the Maria.NOM stopped SBJV get.3SG bad grades
  ‘It’s only Maria who stopped getting bad grades.’ ONLY > STOP

  b. stamatisan [na perni mono i Maria kakus vathmus]
  stopped SBJV get.3SG only the Maria bad grades
  ‘It stopped being the case that only Maria got bad grades.’ STOP > ONLY

- **quantifier float**
  floated quantifiers are licensed in a clausalmate configuration

  (43) a. ola ta pedhia irthan all the children came
  ‘All the children came.’

  b. ta pedhia irthan ola
  the children came all
  ‘The children came all.’

  raised DP licenses a floated quantifier in its clause

  (44) i dhaskali stamatisan oli [na malonun tus mathites]
  the teacher.PL stop.3PL all SBJV scold.3PL the students
  ‘The teachers all stopped scolding the students.’

  un-raised DP does not license floated quantifier in higher clause

  (45) a. *oli stamatisan [na malonun i dhaskali tus mathites]
  all stop.3PL SBJV scold.3PL the teachers the students
  b *stamatisan [na malonun i dhaskali tus mathites] oli
  stop.3PL SBJV scold.3PL the teachers the students all
  c. stamatisan [na malonun oli i dhaskali tus mathites]
  stop.3PL SBJV scold.3PL all the teacher.PL the students
  ‘All the teachers stopped scolding the students.’

- **binding**
  variable binding is permitted only with raised subject

  (46) a. kathe pedhi, tis fenete tis miteras tu, [na agapai to ouzo]
  every child CL seems the mother his SBJV loves the ouzo
  ‘Every child seems to his mother to love ouzo.’

  b. *dhen tis fenete tis miteras tu
  NEG CL seems the mother.GEN his
  [na agapai kathe pedhi, to ouzo]
  SBJV loves every child the ouzo
  ‘Every child doesn’t seem to his mother to love ouzo.’)
• negative concord (cf. Giannakidou 2000)

NPI subject is licensed by clausemate negation

(47) a. kanis dhen paraponiete
   nobody NEG.ROOT complained
   ‘Nobody complained.’

b. kanis dhen arxiso na paraponiete
   nobody NEG.ROOT started SBJV complain
   ‘Nobody began to complain.’

c. dhen arxiso na paraponiete kanis
   NEG.ROOT started SBJV complain nobody
   ‘Nobody began to complain.’

embedded clause NPI is licensed by lower negation:

(48) a. arxizi na min paraponiete pja kanis
   starts SBJV NEG.EMBED complain anymore nobody
   ‘Nobody begins to complain anymore.’ (lit.: “It starts being the case
   that nobody complains anymore.”)

b. *kanis arxizi na min paraponiete pja
   nobody starts SBJV NEG.EMBED complain anymore

3.4 analysis

lack of DP representation in the raising verb’s clause accounts for “low”
characteristics of embedded DP

BACKWARD RAISING and SCRAMBLING analyses ruled out

the agreement must be being determined non-locally, across a clause boundary

in-situ Agree between the raising verb in T˚ and the embedded DP subject

(49) \[ \text{Agree} \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Agree} & \quad \downarrow \\
\text{TP} & \quad \text{T˚}\text{arxisan} \\
\text{CP/TP} & \quad \text{na}\text{trehoun} \\
\text{DP} & \quad \text{ta}\text{pedhia} \\
\text{start.3PL} & \quad \text{SUBJ} \\
\text{run.3PL} & \quad \text{the child.PL} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘The children started to run.’

(50) \text{Agree (Chomsky 2001)/AGREE (Bhatt 2005)}

Agree occurs between two syntactic objects, a probe \( \alpha \) and a goal \( \beta \)

a. \( \alpha \) c-commands \( \beta \)

b. \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) are active

c. \( \alpha \) has an uninterpretable inflectional feature

d. \( \beta \) has an interpretable feature

e. \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) become valued for the matched features

alternative: Move F (feature movement)
Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1999:22 propose that just the agreement features of the embedded DP raise to the matrix T˚


\text{Greek LDA in subject-to-subject raising construction provides genuine evidence for a non-local Agree relation in syntax}

other potential languages with Agree operating long distance (in subject raising constructions): Icelandic (Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir 2003), Hungarian (Szabolcsi 2008), Romanian (Rivero and Geber 2004), German (Sells 2006)

\text{BUT: possible scrambling analysis for some of these languages (e.g., Romanian)}

4 Beyond Adyghe and Greek

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|}
\hline
How common is covert A-movement? \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
Outstanding question: can covert A-movement or LDA be predicted on the basis of independent language properties?

5 Conclusions and open questions

- Covert A-movement is a genuine linguistic phenomenon

(51) Genuine covert A-movement: Backward Raising (Circassian)
   a. the embedded subject shows evidence of being in the higher clause beyond agreement: scope interactions, binding, quantifier float
   b. agreement is established locally

(52) Reliable diagnostics:
   a. constituency: scrambling, coordination diagnostics
   b. binding and coreference options for subject
   c. scope options for subject with respect to the matrix verb or matrix clause operators
   d. licensing of floating matrix clause elements

(53) Deceptive diagnostics: morphological agreement

morphological agreement is available under both covert A-movement, Agree with scrambling, and Agree under long-distance agreement; thus it cannot distinguish these phenomena (cf. Chung 2009 on the unreliable nature of morphological agreement)

- Difference between covert A-movement and Agree—both are needed in the grammar, therefore, their division of labor needs to be made explicit

- How much do we know A-movement?


References


Chung, Sandra. 2009. The relation(s) behind agreement. Paper presented at this meeting.


Moore, John and David Perlmutter. 2000. What does it take to be a dative subject? Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 18, 373-416.


Polinsky, Maria and Eric Potsdam. 2006. Expanding the scope of control and raising. Syntax 9, 171-192.


Maria Polinsky
Department of Linguistics
Boylston Hall
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138
polinsky@fas.harvard.edu

I would like to thank my Adyghe language consultants Raxmet Esheva, Raxmet Gisheva, Mira Unarokova, Acherdan Abzhegov, Svetlana Kinokova, and the research team at the Russian University for the Humanities (RGGU) under the direction of Yakov Testelets. I would like to thank Elena Anagnostopoulou, Amalia Arvaniti, Anastasia Giannakidou, Sabine Iatridou, and Vina Tsakali for their help with the Greek data.

This project was supported in part by NSF grants BCS-0131993 and BCS-0231946, a grant from the Center for Research in Language at UCSD, and by a grant from the Davis Center at Harvard University.